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# **Import Health Standards for the Importation of Dogs and Cats by Air into Malta from Specified Countries**

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## **1. IMPORT HEALTH PERMIT**

- 1.1 An Import Health Permit must be obtained before importation. Applications shall be made to:

Director of Veterinary Service  
Albertown - Marsa - Malta

## **2. REVIEW OF IMPORT HEALTH STANDARD**

The import health standard may be reviewed and amended when there is a change in policy, or as directed by the Director of Veterinary Service.

## **3. DOCUMENTATION**

The Import health permit and all the certification required below must accompany the animals to Malta:

- Animal Health Certificate
- Owner/Agent Declaration A
- Veterinary Certificate B

## **4. DISPENSATION APPLICATION**

The Import health standard has been agreed as being suitable for trade between the exporting and the importing countries. It is expected that the animal/s will meet the conditions in every respect.

Occasionally it is found that, due to circumstances beyond the importer's control, the animal/s or products do not comply completely with the requirements. In such cases an application for dispensation will be considered and issued at the discretion of the Malta Veterinary Service, but only if the following information is forwarded by the certifying government's veterinary authorities:

- 4.1 which clause/s of the import health standard cannot be met and how this has occurred;

- 4.2 the reason the animal/s are considered to be of an 'equivalent health status' and/or what proposal is made to return the animal/s to an equivalent health status as set-out in the health conditions;
- 4.3 the reasons why it is believed that this proposal should be accepted to the Malta Veterinary Service and the recommendation for its acceptance.

## **5. IMPORTER'S/AGENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1 All costs of selection, testing, treatment, transport, quarantine servicing and veterinary supervision must be borne by the importer or agent as appropriate.
- 5.2 The importer or agent must make all arrangements for transport and obtain necessary transit authorities from any third countries on the transport route.

## **6. ELIGIBILITY FOR IMPORTATION**

- 6.1 These conditions apply to dogs and cats from specified countries and territories in the three groups below:
  - (a) Fiji, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Mauritius, Netherlands, Antilles and Aruba, Portugal, Spain, Seychelles, Taiwan.
  - (b) Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greenland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland, United States of America.
  - (c) Australia, Hawaii, Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, United Kingdom.
- 6.2 During the two months immediately before export the animals must not have been resident in official quarantine premises.
- 6.3 Animals must not be more than 42 days pregnant at the date of shipment.
- 6.4 Animals must be more than 9 months old at departure.

## 7. IDENTIFICATION

- 7.1 Each animal must be identified with a microchip and the identification details must be shown on the accompanying certification. It is recommended that microchip brands adopted by the Convention for the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), or the Federation of European Community Animal Veterinary Association (FECAVA), or the International Standards Organisation (ISO) are used. The importer shall ensure that a reader is made available to identify animals arriving in Malta quarantine.

## 8. TESTING/TREATMENTS

- 8.1 The required health tests and treatments are defined in the Veterinary Certificate.
- 8.2 All serological tests must be conducted at a Government, or Government approved laboratory, except the Ehrlichia tests, which may be conducted at a laboratory recognised by the Veterinary Authority.
- 8.3 If the Veterinary Authority in the country of origin can show to the satisfaction of the Director of Veterinary Service that a disease which has a testing requirement (e.g. canine heartworm) does not occur in that country, then testing can be waived at the discretion of the Director of Veterinary Service.
- 8.4 Recommendations for Malta dog owners importing a dog from countries with canine heartworm;
- 8.4.1 the dog should be tested by a veterinarian for heartworm 7 months after importation using the microfilariae concentration test and an antigen test.
- 8.4.2 Maltese who take their dogs to countries with heartworm should ensure that the dogs are given monthly prophylactic treatment with avermectin drugs effective against the fourth stage larvae of *Dirofilaria immitis* which causes canine heartworm.

## 9. AIR TRANSPORT

- 9.1 No animals other than those qualified for entry into Malta are permitted to be carried on the aircraft.
- 9.2 The animal must be carried in an approved container which meets the IATA standards i.e. it is so constructed so that:

- it is strong enough to prevent the animal escaping,
  - the whole of one end open and covered with bars, weld mesh, or smooth expanded metal securely attached, to provide the main ventilation opening,
  - have ventilation openings on all sides totalling a minimum of 16% of the surface area of the four sides,
  - be nose and paw proof, i.e. only have ventilation openings of such size that it is impossible for the animal to protrude its nose or paws outside the container,
  - be large enough to permit the animal to stand in a natural position, turn around and lie down,
  - contain a fixed drinking bowl to which water can be provided without opening the container.
- 9.3 The use of straw or hay as bedding is not permitted. Only sterilised peat, soft board or other inert approved product may be used.
- 9.4 The door of the container must be sealed with a government approved seal before the container is loaded into the aircraft in the country of origin. The number or mark on the seal is to be recorded on the accompanying documentation. The construction of the container and the placement of the seal must be such that the container cannot be readily opened without breaking the seal. If the container is opened during shipment it shall be re-sealed and a certificate detailing the circumstances provided by an Official Veterinarian, or the Captain of the aircraft.
- 9.5 The container must not be off-loaded en route except during normal baggage handling procedures and where trans-shipment has been specifically authorised by the government veterinary authority.
- 9.6 Air carriers must advise the Malta Quarantine Service at least 72 hours before the expected time of arrival of any animal, giving the flight number and arrival time.

## **10. ARRIVAL IN MALTA**

On arrival in Malta the animal will be transported directly, by the quarantine operator or agent, in approved transport to the registered dog and cat quarantine facility.

## **11. QUARANTINE**

- 11.1 Animals shall be held for a minimum period of 21 days in quarantine, for dogs originating from countries listed 6.1.c, 30 days, for dogs originating from countries listed at 6.1.b and 6 months for dogs/cats originating from countries listed at 6.1.a
- 11.2 If the container is unsealed, the seal is broken, or if the accompanying documentation is unsatisfactory, the animal may, at the discretion of the Director of Veterinary Service and at the expense of the importer, be exported, destroyed, or required to remain in quarantine for up to 180 days.
- 11.3 During quarantine the animal will be retested by a neutralising antibody titration test for rabies antibody. If there is insufficient rabies antibody in the animal's serum, the animal may be re-vaccinated and/or re-tested, exported, destroyed, or required to remain in quarantine for 180 days.
- 11.4. During quarantine, each imported dog may be tested for heartworm due to *Dirofilaria immitis*, leptospirosis due to *Leptospira interrogans var canicola*, canine brucellosis (*Brucella canis*) and canine tropical pancytopenia (*Ehrlichia canis*). If the animal is positive to any of these tests it may be treated and re-tested. If the dog is exported, destroyed or detained in quarantine.
- 11.5 The Director of Veterinary Service reserves the right to review the period of quarantine for any animal.

## **12 BIOSECURITY CLEARANCE**

The animal will be eligible for release from quarantine after the stipulated time and a biosecurity clearance will be given by the veterinary officer supervising the quarantine facility when all conditions have been met.

## SCHEDULE 1

### ANIMAL HEALTH CERTIFICATE: DOG/CAT

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Exporting Country: .....

Import Health Permit No: .....

Ministry/Department:.....

Service: .....

Region: .....

#### I. IDENTIFICATION OF ANIMALS

Type of Animal: ☐ Feline ☐ Canine

Name of Animal: .....

Age or date of Birth: .....

Sex (please tick)

☐ Male

☐ Female

(must not be more than 6 weeks pregnant)

☐ Neutered Male

☐ Neutered Female

Breed:.....

(Breeds ineligible for imports: pit bull terriers, Japanes tosa, dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro)

Colour: .....

Coat type and markings: .....

Microchip Number: ..... Scanner type: ..... Implanted Site: .....

#### II. ORIGIN OF THE ANIMALS

Name(s) and address(es) of exporter(s):.....

.....

Place(s) of origin of animals .....

(where it has been domiciled during the 6 months prior to export)

Airport embarkation: .....

#### III. DESTINATION OF ANIMALS

Name and address of consignee: .....

.....

Means of transport: .....

Airport of arrival: .....

#### **IV. SANITARY INFORMATION**

I, ....., being a Government Veterinary Officer, or a veterinarian accredited to provide export certification on behalf of the Government Veterinary Service (here after called the Accredited Veterinarian), certify with respect to the animals identified in the Animal Health Certificate:

1. After due enquiry I have no reason to doubt the owner/agent's declaration.
2. After due enquiry I am satisfied that the animal has been continuously resident in the country or territory of origin for the past 6 months and has not been in quarantine or under quarantine restrictions during the 60 days immediately prior to export.
3. 3.1 The dog and or cat was vaccinated against rabies with an approved inactivated virus vaccine:

- in the case of a primovaccination,

on ..... (date) not less than 6 months and not more than one year prior to shipment, when the animal was at least 3 months old,

OR

- in the case of a booster vaccination,

on ..... (date), not more than one year prior to shipment.

- 3.2 A copy of the rabies vaccination certificate for the most recent vaccination, and in the case where the most recent vaccination was a booster, a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate for the previous vaccination, is attached.

- 3.3 The animal was subjected on ..... (date), being not less than 3 months and not more than 6 months prior to shipment, to a neutralising antibody titration for rabies conducted at an official laboratory in accordance with one of the methods described in the OIE Manual of Standards for diagnostic tests and vaccines, and found to have at least 0.5 IU/ml of antibody in its serum; a copy of the laboratory report is attached.
4. During the previous 12 months but not less than 30 days immediately prior to export the animal was vaccinated against:
- EITHER, in the case of a dog;  
canine distemper, infectious hepatitis, canine parvovirus, para influenza.
- OR, in the case of a cat;  
feline enteritis, feline rhinotracheitis and feline calicivirus.
5. In the case of a dog, it has been tested and or treated for canine heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*) according to the following schedule:
- 5.1 within 30 days of departure one to two mls of blood were collected from the dog and tested negative to a microfilariae concentration test and an antigen test.
- 5.2 within 24 hours of export to MALTA the dog was treated orally with one dose of ivermectin at 50 mcg/kg by the certifying veterinarian.
6. In the case of a dog; within 30 days prior to the schedule of shipment:
- 6.1 the dog has been tested using the slide agglutination test (microscopic agglutination test) for *Brucella canis* with negative results - negative is less than 50% agglutination at a serum dilution of 1:100)
- 6.2 It has been tested using the agglutination test for leptospirosis (serotype *Leptospira canicola*) with negative results, (negative is less than 50% agglutination at 1:100).
- OR
- the dog was tested for *Leptospira interrogans* var. *canicola* infection by serum agglutination tests, on samples collected twice at an interval of not less than 14



days within 30 days prior to export, with a titre of not more than 1:400 on each occasion and no increase in titre between the first and second tests and the laboratory report (or a copy endorsed by an Official Veterinarian) is attached;

Date of sample collection: .....

OR

within 30 days prior to export the dog was treated with dihydrostreptomycin sulfate daily for 5 days at therapeutic dose rates;

Dose rate of dihydrostreptomycin sulfate used ..... mg/kg bodyweight

Date of first treatment: ..... Date of last treatment: .....

- 6.3 The dog has been tested using the indirect fluorescent antibody test for canine tropical pancytopenia - Ehrlichia canis (infection) with negative results (Laboratory results attached to this certificate.

7. In the case of a dog and/or cat:

- 7.1 Within 14 days of the intended date of shipment the animal was treated for Nematodes by an approved anthelmintic effective against Nematodes:

Active Ingredient: .....

Dose rate: ..... Date of treatment: .....

Within 14 days of the intended date of shipment, the animal was treated for cestodes by an approved anthelmintic effective against cestodes:

Active ingredient: .....

Dose rate: ..... Date of treatment: .....

- 7.3.1 the animal was examined and found to be free from clinical signs of infectious or contagious diseases and of external parasites, and was treated with an insecticide dip or spray capable of killing ticks, lice and fleas within 96 hours prior to export.

Active ingredient: .....

Date of administration: .....

8. All laboratory tests were conducted at a Government laboratory or one approved by the Government Veterinary Service of this country.

.....

Accredited Veterinarian or  
Government Veterinary Officer

(Delete whichever is not applicable)

.....

Date

If the above signature is that of an Accredited Veterinarian; I the undersigned certify that  
..... is an Accredited Veterinarian.

.....

Government Veterinary Officer

.....

Official stamp and date

**OWNER/AGENT DECLARATION - A**

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I, ....., being the owner/agent of the animal identified in the Animal Health Certificate declare that:

1. The animal has been continuously resident in the country or territory of origin for the past 6 months prior to export and has not been in an official quarantine establishment during the preceding 60 days.
2. The animal will not be more than 42 days pregnant at the scheduled time of shipment.
3. The animal will be more than 9 months old at the scheduled time of shipment.
4. The animal has been dispatched in a container that meets IATA standards.

.....  
Signature of Owner/Agent

.....  
Date

## **PORT VETERINARY CERTIFICATE**

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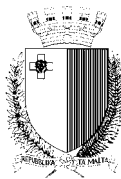
I, ....., being a Government Veterinarian at .....  
airport certify with respect to the animal identified in Part 1 of this certificate that:

1. The animal was inspected and found to be healthy and fit to travel to MALTA.
2. All required documents were examined and found to be correctly completed in accordance with Malta conditions of importation.
3. The animal was placed in a container that meets IATA standards which was fastened with an official seal having the marks:

.....

.....  
Government Veterinary officer

.....  
Official stamp and date



MINISTERU  
AGRIKOLTURA U SAJD

*Dipartiment tas-Servizz  
Veterinarju*

MINISTRY OF  
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

*Department of Veterinary  
Service*

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**Application for a Licence for the  
Importation of Live Animals into Malta**

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Name of Owner:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address in  
Malta:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address Abroad:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Country of  
Origin:

\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Animal:

\_\_\_\_\_

Sex:

\_\_\_\_\_

Breed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Colour:

\_\_\_\_\_

Age:

\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_